IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (unchanged) An apparatus for applying adhesive to an outer circumferential surface of a section of tubing comprising:
a) first and second grippers having tube-mating faces, said faces each being formed with a concave adhesive transfer area dimensioned and disposed for surrounding said outer circumferential surface of said tubing;
b) first and second adhesive supply passages extending through said first and second grippers and into communication with said adhesive transfer areas for delivering said adhesive to said adhesive transfer areas;
c) counterbores at opposite respective ends of said adhesive transfer areas, and;
d) a vacuum apparatus communicating with said counterbores for removing excess adhesive.

Claim 2. (unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of said first and second grippers has opposite front and rear faces, said adhesive transfer areas being aligned substantially transverse to said front and rear faces of said respective grippers, said counterbores comprising a front counterbore extending into said front face of each said gripper and a rear counterbore extending into said rear face of each said gripper, said front and rear counterbores being cross-sectionally larger than said adhesive transfer area and being substantially symmetrical about said adhesive transfer area.

Claim 3. (unchanged) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein each said adhesive transfer area is substantially semi-cylindrically generated.

Claim 4. (unchanged) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said adhesive supply passages communicate with said adhesive transfer areas at locations substantially centrally between said front and rear faces of said grippers.

Claim 5. (unchanged) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said vacuum apparatus comprises first and second vacuum channels formed in said tube-mating faces of said grippers at locations for substantial registration with one another and at locations spaced from said tube transfer areas, said channels communicating with said front and rear counterbores, said vacuum apparatus further comprising a vacuum passage extending from said vacuum channels to a vacuum source.

Claim 6. (unchanged) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the vacuum passage is formed in said first gripper.

Claim 7. (unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each said gripper has an upper end engageable with means for moving said grippers toward and away from one another, each said gripper further having a lower end, said adhesive transfer areas defining a common longitudinal axis when said grippers are moved toward one another, said adhesive passages being disposed between said common axis of said adhesive transfer areas and said upper ends of said grippers, said vacuum apparatus communicating with locations on said grippers between said common axis and said lower end of said grippers.

Claim 8. (unchanged) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising means for selectively moving said first and second grippers toward and away from one another, means for directing said adhesive to said respective first and second adhesive passages before moving said first and second grippers toward one another and means for operating said vacuum apparatus after said first and second grippers move toward one another.

Claim 9. (unchanged) An apparatus for applying adhesive to an outer circumferential surface of a section of substantially cylindrical tubing, said apparatus comprising first and second grippers, each said gripper having an upper end mountable to means for moving said grippers toward and away from one another and an opposite lower end, each said gripper further having a tube mounting face in proximity to said lower end, each said tube mounting face being formed with a substantially horizontal concave semi-cylindrical adhesive transfer area extending therethrough, front and rear counterbores being formed in each said tube mounting face at opposite respective ends of each said adhesive transfer area, said adhesive transfer area, said front counterbore and said rear counterbore in said first gripper being disposed to register respectively with said adhesive transfer area, said front counterbore and said rear counterbore of said second gripper, first and second adhesive passages formed respectively in said first and second grippers for delivering adhesive to upper portions of said adhesive transfer areas, a vacuum channel formed in at least one of said tube mounting faces and communicating with said front and rear counterbores, and a vacuum source communicating with said vacuum channel for removing excess adhesive from said counterbores.

Claims 10-12 (cancelled)